

APR 15 2009

April 10, 2009

DOT  
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Neil J. Pedersen  
Administrator  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
707 North Calvert Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

RE: Howard Hughes Medical Institute  
Proposed Maryland State Highway Administration Road Improvements

Dear Mr. Pedersen:

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute ("HHMI") writes this letter to express its strong disappointment with the State Highway Administration's ("SHA") proposed intersection improvements in response to projected increases in vehicular traffic associated with the Base Realignment and Closure ("BRAC") action at the National Naval Medical Center ("NNMC") in Bethesda, Maryland. The proposed designs are ineffective, shortsighted and, if implemented, would be an irresponsible expenditure of public funds.

HHMI is a non-profit medical research organization that ranks as one of the nation's largest philanthropies and one of Maryland's major employers. Its headquarters is located on a 22.5-acre campus in Chevy Chase, Maryland and is adjacent to one of SHA's targeted intersections, Connecticut Avenue and Jones Bridge Road. The headquarters campus is in a residential setting and includes offices and associated facilities that support more than 250 Maryland-based employees. HHMI's laboratories are led by 350 of the nation's premiere scientists found at 71 distinguished U.S. universities, research institutes, medical schools, and affiliated hospitals. Our scientists include 12 Nobel Prize winners and 123 members of the National Academy of Sciences.

As an NNMC neighbor, HHMI has actively participated in the BRAC public process since it began in November 2007. We have consistently endorsed efforts to enhance the facilities at NNMC as a world-class medical institution, while pressing for effective implementation of BRAC-associated transportation improvements. In letters dated January 18, 2008 and April 29,

**Robert Tjian, Ph.D.**

President  
Howard Hughes Medical Institute  
4000 Jones Bridge Road  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815-6789  
301.215.8550 • Fax 301.215.8558  
president@hhmi.org

Professor  
Molecular and Cell Biology  
University of California, Berkeley  
16 Barker Hall  
Berkeley, California 94720-3204  
510.642.0884 • Fax 510.643.9547

2008 in response to BRAC's Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements, HHMI stated its view that BRAC would succeed in meeting the needs of wounded warriors, their families and their caregivers only if potential transportation impacts are addressed in a long-term, comprehensive manner. HHMI offered to work with Navy, State and County officials to help ensure this success. We specifically did not support so-called transportation mitigation measures that put more strain on the already over-burdened local area road network.

The short-term intersection improvement plans recently unveiled by SHA are the opposite of what's needed and are exactly the type that should be avoided. These so-called improvements are doomed to be expensive and obsolete from the moment the first car passes through the new intersection because they are designed in the complete absence of long-range, comprehensive transit planning for the area. By SHA's own standards, the intersection improvements are inadequate: After considerable expenditure of public funds, not to mention substantial disruption, the intersection will barely reach an 'E' level of service and will achieve a volume to capacity ratio of .99. Moreover, the SHA intersection plans throughout the study area fail to address the systemic impact of piecemeal intersection improvements and the long-term need to reduce single occupancy vehicle traffic. It is far from clear that SHA considered potential transit improvements, including the Purple Line, in its planning process.

Perhaps most concerning is the fact that SHA's plans are devoid of any pedestrian or bicycle improvements that would enhance alternate commuting options and take cars off of already clogged roads while maintaining the residential character of the area. Instead, SHA proposes to squeeze residential property owners already struggling to maintain their homes and to take a major slice of a verdant campus that was designed with a substantial buffer required by Montgomery County authorities. In the end, SHA proposes to provide intrusive and costly lane widenings that will have negligible, if any, effect on already failing intersections. The cost of this piecemeal approach in terms of taxpayer funds and neighborhood disruption cannot be justified.

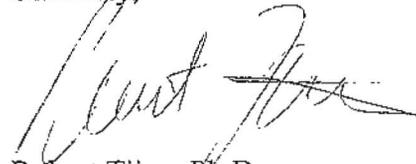
SHA's plan is particularly disappointing to HHMI because it is directly impacted by SHA's ineffective and unimaginative approach to traffic. Under current plans, HHMI's campus may lose as much as 100 feet of Jones Bridge Road frontage to accommodate proposed lane widenings and associated easements. Even more alarming is the fact that HHMI has no assurance that SHA won't seek to take additional property in the future or that these impacts can be restored once other, more creative, long-term traffic solutions inevitably are implemented in the future.

An additional disappointment is SHA's failure to engage in discussions with HHMI until after SHA had developed its plans. We first learned of the potential loss to HHMI's campus on March 17, 2009 at the Montgomery County BRAC Implementation Committee meeting. Despite being an affected party and our previous offers to work with State officials, HHMI's first meeting with SHA occurred on March 27, 2009 - at HHMI's request. This was a year and four months after the BRAC process began. Notwithstanding this treatment, we will endeavor to

work with SHA and others toward sustained and durable solutions to the traffic problems, not only at the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and Jones Bridge Road but throughout the broader area.

At a time of constrained resources at all levels, HHMI believes that it is imperative that SHA's short-term plans not be shortsighted. Federal, state, and county leaders must demand solutions that live up to the stature of the world-class community that will soon be home to the nation's premiere military medical center.

Sincerely,



Robert Tjian, Ph.D.  
President

Cc: The Honorable Martin O'Malley, Governor of Maryland  
The Honorable Anthony Brown, Lieutenant Governor of Maryland  
John D. Porcari, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Christian S. Johansson, Secretary Maryland Department of Business and Economic  
Development  
The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
The Honorable Benjamin J. Cardin  
The Honorable Christopher Van Hollen  
The Honorable Richard Madaleno  
The Honorable Alfred Carr  
The Honorable Ana Sol Gutierrez  
The Honorable Jeffrey Waldstreicher  
The Honorable Isiah Leggett  
✓ The Honorable Arthur Holmes  
The Honorable Phil Andrews  
The Honorable Roger Berliner  
The Honorable Michael Knapp  
The Honorable Nancy Floreen  
The Honorable Valerie Ervin  
The Honorable George Leventhal  
The Honorable Marc Elrich  
The Honorable Royce Hanson